

## HEEL-TOUCH AND ROLL-UP



In walking, each step should begin with a heel strike. Then weight rolls across the foot, and off the ball of the foot. This heel-toe flowing motion is the focus of this activity.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Practices aspects of normal gait mechanics.
- ⦿ Improves functional range of motion at the hip, knee, and ankle.
- ⦿ Practices one-legged standing.

### ***Set It Up »***

Provide appropriate balance support for each participant, such as a sturdy chair or a handrail.

### ***How to Do It »***

Participants stand beside their chair with one hand on the chair back for balance support. Feet are shoulder-width apart and offset (one foot forward, one back; the foot closest to the chair should be the back one). Their knees should be soft and their torso stable. Teach this activity in two parts.

#### ***Part I: Roll Forward and Up on Toes***

- ⦿ Use the following cues.
  - Rock forward and back a few times (between front and back feet).
  - Notice that when you rock forward you rock up onto your toes. (Onto balls of feet with the heels lifted.)
  - Notice that when you rock back; toes come up a bit.
  - And your weight is mostly on the back foot. Can you feel that?
- ⦿ Repeat a few more times, but in a more exaggerated manner. Can they feel the rolling heel-toe motion? Then, cue the following:
  - Rock forward. Roll up onto your toes and lift heels. Hold a moment.
  - Rock back; toes lift.
  - Notice how it feels to roll across the heel and up onto the toes.
  - Rock back, and lift the toes in the back position. Good.

## ***Part II: Add a Knee Lift***



- Use the following cues.
  - With one hand on the handrail, rock forward, rock back, and then lift the front knee as part of the rocking-back motion.
  - Balance for just a moment on the back leg, with your knee lifted.
  - Touch the front heel down, and roll forward onto it, heel-toe style.
  - Rock and roll all the way across the foot and up onto your toes.
  - Rock back and lift the knee again. Hold a moment and balance.
  - Repeat it all together: Rock back, knee lift, and hold; roll forward, heels up.
  - Rock back, lift the knee, and hold; roll forward, heels up.
- Have participants walk to the other side of the handrail and repeat with the other leg.

### ***Give It More Balance »***

- Hold the knee lift a few seconds.
- Hold onto the balance support less tightly.
- Intermediate: Lift the outside arm up and directly overhead during the roll-up.
- Advanced: Place hands on hips, so there is no touching the chair.

### ***Keep It Safe »***

Take it slow and easy. Keep participants close to their chairs, and watch them for their confidence and comfort level. Again, it is the rocking and rolling that makes this one-legged standing so easy and natural.

### ***Live It »***

Rocking and rolling provides good movement cues and a certain rhythm; it's very much like gait, too. If the weight shifts are complete and rhythmical, participants can likely balance themselves on one leg, if even for a moment longer than previously thought.